

An Introduction to National Heritage Areas



What *is* a heritage area?



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Historic Preservation



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An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense forest. The trees on the left bank are in peak autumn foliage, showing vibrant yellows and oranges, while the trees on the right bank are mostly green. The river is dark and calm, reflecting the surrounding landscape.

Conservation



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Recreation



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Education and Interpretation



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Tourism and Economic Development



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How do you link these assets together?



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Heritage Areas are a **Strategy**

- **Locally initiated**
- **Built on partnerships between organizations**
- **Planned around a region's shared heritage**



National Heritage Areas are...

Designated by Congress based on national importance of the resources and on the support of local communities

Great Road | **Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor**



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History

27 National Heritage Areas

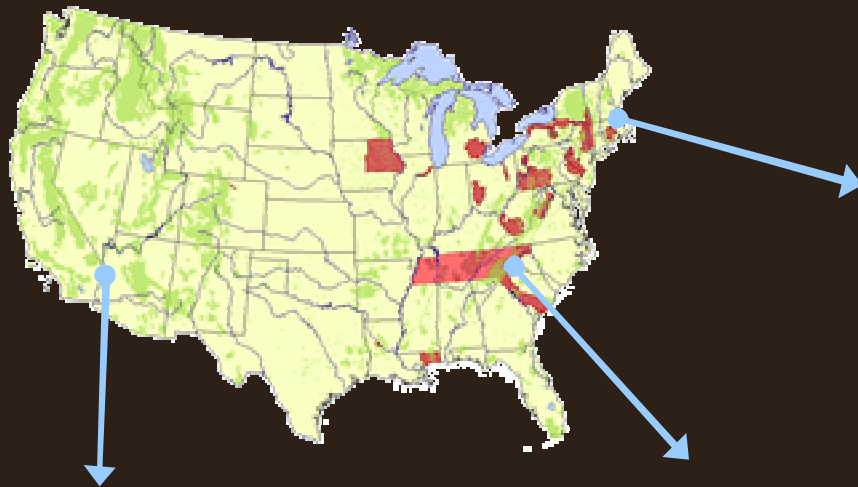
**1984: Illinois &
Michigan Canal**

2004: 3 areas designated

- National heritage area
- Federal recreation lands



Different Sizes, Resources, **Stories**



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Statistics

National heritage areas cover 6% of the Continental US (187,000 sq. mi.) yet include:

- 18% of the population (49 million)**
- 21% of all US Congressional districts (91)**
- 19 States (~40%)**



Statistics

Concentration of resources:

– **21%** of National Historic Landmarks (500)



Five roles **of the National Park Service**

1. Technical assistance

2. Planning





3. Funding
4. Branding
**5. Continued
partnership**



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The Benefits

of National Heritage Areas

- 1. Conserve living landscapes and cultures,**
- 2. Allow people to tell stories in their own words,**
- 3. Provide integrated resource conservation,**
- 4. Engage public beyond park boundaries, and**
- 5. Provide new partnership opportunities...**



1. Conserve living landscapes and cultures



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**2. Allow
people to tell
stories in
their own
words**





3. Provide integrated resource conservation



4. Engage the public beyond park boundaries



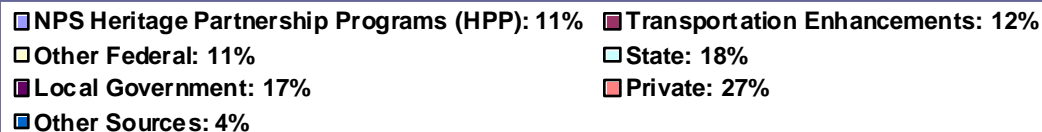
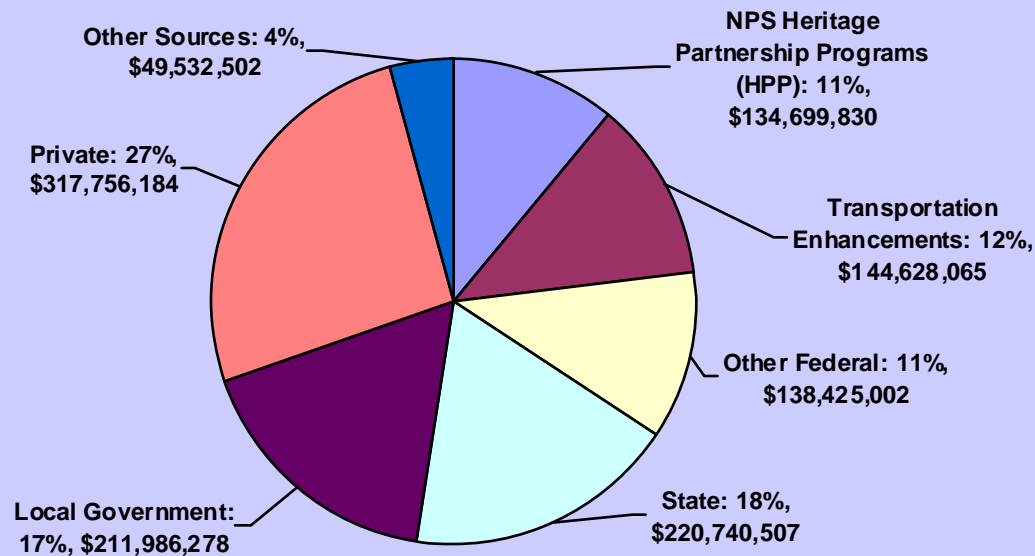
5. Provide new partnership opportunities



Economic leveraging **diversity**

Leveraging of NPS Heritage Partnership Programs Funding to Heritage Areas: 1:8

(Since NPS funding began)



Critical Steps to Designation

There is no formal process for NHA designation.

Recommended:

- Completion of suitability/ feasibility study**
- Public involvement in planning**
- Demonstration of widespread community involvement**
- Commitment from key constituents**



Regional Tourism **Strategy**

Results:

- **Regional collaboration**
- **Consensus through planning**
- **Leveraging of Resources**
- **Unified story**

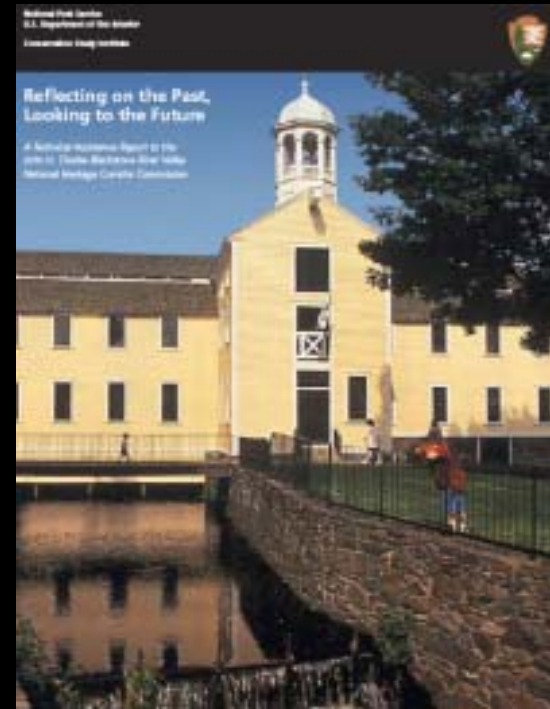


Examples:



Trends in national heritage areas

Better Planning and Evaluation



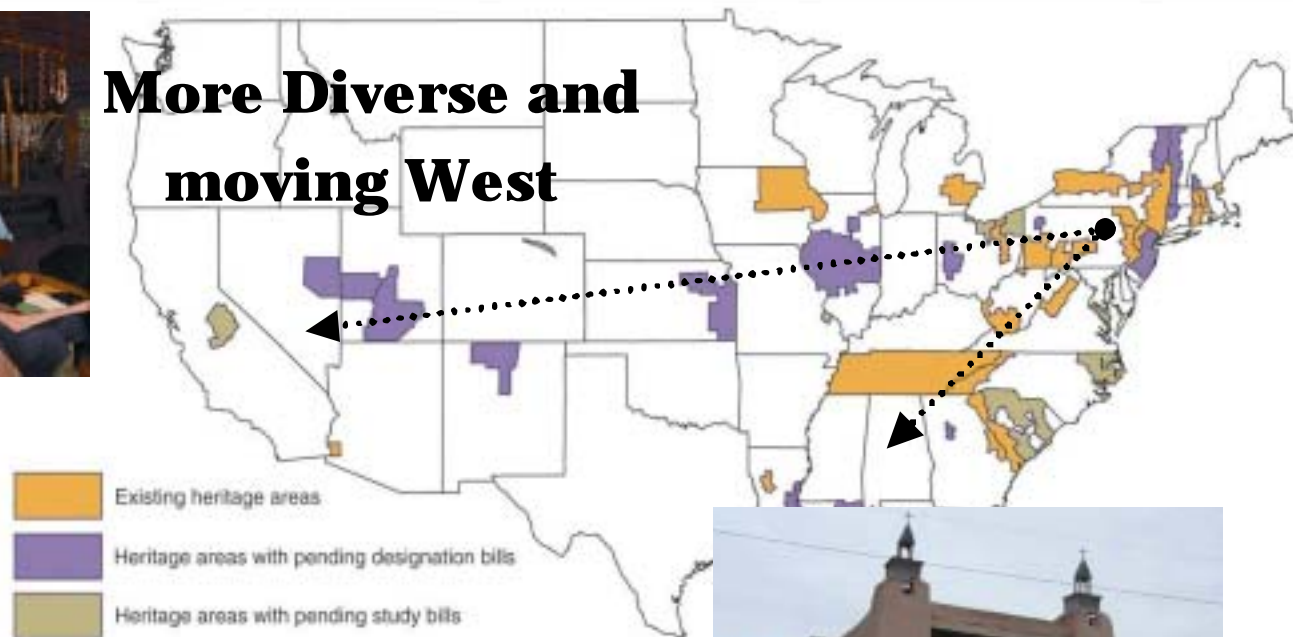
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Partnering with NPS Units





More Diverse and moving West





Questions?

202.354.2222

www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/